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Brush Up Nebraska volunteer receives Governor's Points of Light award

Lincoln, Neb. – Kelly Souder has led a team of volunteers to paint the exterior of a home for low-income elderly or low-income permanently disabled homeowners in the Omaha Metro Area since 2006. The volunteers scrape, prime and paint the home and work on the yard. Kelly manages a team of approximately 30 volunteers making sure they apply the paint properly, use lead safe practices in the removal of loose paint, and keep themselves safe. She also works with the homeowner to select the paint and make sure the homeowner is comfortable with the entire process.

Governor Heineman and First Lady Sally Ganem honored Kelly for her volunteer efforts with the Governor's Points of Light adult award at a ceremony in the Warner Chamber at the State Capitol. The awards are sponsored by ServeNebraska, Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission and presented quarterly in recognition of volunteers who give their time, talent and energy to help Nebraskans build stronger communities.

In 2008, Kelly joined the board of directors of Brush up Nebraska Paint-A-Thon and helped to secure a financial sponsorship from her company, Tenaska. The last two years she has served as vice president, and in November she will assume the presidency. Brush up Nebraska Paint-A-Thon is a corporately sponsored project that in 24 years has painted the homes of 2,486 homeowners. In 2012, 74 homes were painted by Paint-A-Thon volunteers.

Kelly has been instrumental in the running of the program since she joined the board of directors. Most of the homes have not been painted for many years and after the painting is complete it makes the home more energy efficient and beautifies the neighborhood. The issue of removal of lead paint has been dealt with by an ad hoc committee of which Kelly is a member. "We make sure that lead paint chips are not left on the ground that could endanger any child."

Kelly forms a team of volunteers that make a huge impact on the homeowners. This year's home was painted by 34 volunteers and they spent over 136 hours painting, plus countless hours by Kelly organizing the event. The homeowner, 77 lives alone and replied on the evaluation form that she was very happy with the painting, and was so proud and honored to meet the crew. She'd lived in the home since 1953, it was the "dream home" for she and her husband and she thanked the team for bringing it back to "its beauty". A job well done!

To nominate individuals and groups for the Governor's Points of Light Awards who have made a difference through volunteerism and service, visit the ServeNebraska website at www.serve.nebraska.gov. The next nomination deadline is March 15, 2013.

ServeNebraska pursues its mission of mobilizing Nebraskans to strengthen their communities through volunteering, collaboration and national service programs.

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